

For Immediate Release

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HERSETH SANDLIN STATEMENT ON HOUSE HEALTH CARE BILL

Washington, DC {November 6,2009}- U.S. Rep. Stephanie Herseth Sandlin today announced that while the House health care bill includes a number of good provisions, it is not the right answer for South Dakota because it could unintentionally threaten existing access to health care in our state, and it does not include sufficient cost-containment and deficit reduction measures. She will oppose the bill, which is scheduled to be on the House floor Saturday evening.

Herseth Sandlin said, "It's critical that we control rising health care costs, increase quality and value within our health care system, and improve access to health care and affordable health insurance coverage. The strength of our communities in South Dakota depends on the health of our people."

She continued, "Unfortunately, the House bill misses a critical opportunity to address access, quality and costs on the one hand, and solidify our fiscal future on the other hand. I am convinced this Congress and the President will achieve fundamental reform because our country must fix what's broken in our health care system. There is simply too much at stake for South Dakota's families and businesses, who have either seen their premiums rise sharply year after year, or who still have no access to an affordable plan."

Herseth Sandlin added, "While the House bill does not yet represent the right formula for South Dakota I remain optimistic that, with the House and Senate working together with the President, we will achieve a good bill for South Dakota during this Congress. The time has come for fundamental reform that meets the twin goals of improved access, affordability and coverage, but also fiscal responsibility over the long-term. We need to fix what's broken in the system."

Herseth Sandlin pointed to the potential impact of the House bill on Medicaid provisions on South Dakota's state budget, and the reductions in payments for long-term care under Medicare

as areas of serious concern.

Underlying her concerns about access is a concern about the effect of the House bill on the nation's long term deficit, and more specifically, its failure to start bringing down the deficit and health care costs in the long term. Herseth Sandlin noted that skyrocketing long-term costs will bankrupt the Medicare trust fund by 2017.

The House bill does include a number of good provisions which enjoy strong support among South Dakotans. Herseth Sandlin said, "I strongly support provisions in this bill to require insurance companies to cover people with preexisting conditions, and end the insurance companies' ability to cancel coverage when someone becomes sick. These practices must end. In addition, I support establishing health insurance exchanges to provide a transparent and competitive marketplace for individuals and businesses to buy more affordable health care plans."

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